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THE FORMATION OF A COALITION IN THE 1963 WASHINGTON STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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I. A CLIMATE FOR COALITION

Defection in party ranks is no new phenomenon in the legislative process in the Congress and in two-party state legislatures. But with few exceptions, party regularity has carried the day in that first duty of a newly-constituted legislative body to organize itself for the conduct of future business.

It is commonly pointed out that the real evidence of two-party competition is in the historically partisan ritual of electing a chamber's presiding officer. The routine occupation of this post by the majority party legitimizes its claim to the perquisites and instruments of leadership, which are then doled out on the majority's terms to its members. The minority, in turn, accepts both the role of "opposition" and the reduced perquisites earned by its smaller membership. From this point on, the crossing of party lines proceeds with greater or lesser abandon in accordance with the great differences in party discipline found among the 101 state and national legislative bodies in the United States. This, then, is the approximate "norm" of organizational procedure as it operates in this country's principal legislatures.

But 1963 brought to the Washington State House of Representatives a different, and comparatively rare, pattern of inter-party relationships. The events of that year in Olympia, while inconsistent with the nationwide norm described above, are readily comprehend-

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ed in the context of unpredictability and irregularity which is part of Washington's political tradition. Nowhere are these features better exemplified than in the "blanket primary" which originated in Washington and is still unique to that state. Created in 1935, the blanket primary allows all properly registered voters to vote for any candidate for each office, regardless of political affiliation, and without any declaration of political faith or adherence to any party. Thus the Washington voter is initiated into split-ticket voting long before he is, if ever, educated in the subtleties of what E. E. Schattschneider and other students of politics have termed "party government."[2] Malcolm E. Jewell has accurately summarized the effects of Washington's "free" political climate in these words:

> Washington presents an example of a state where both parties are more heterogeneous and party unity is lower despite a high degree of organization in the legislative parties . . . . In other words, neither party is likely to be united by common interests.[3]

In 1963 the "common interests" failed to overcome forces for division among Democrats in the House of Representatives, with the result that the apparent Democratic majority became an actual minority. This transformation was aided by complete solidarity in the Republican membership, brought together by the opportunity to share in majority status.

The Republican position as the "out party" since 1957 in both the executive and legislative branches undoubtedly contributed to its cohesion in these circumstances. To this may be added the fact that, in recent years, Washington Democrats have generally experienced greater factionalism than have their Republican opponents.[4] This was dramatically portrayed at the 1962 state Democratic convention, where Representative William S. Day of Spokane led a group of "conservative" Democratic legislators in a protest walk-out over certain planks of the new state platform.

The Republican offensive for increased legislative power was begun at least a year before the election of November, 1962. Daniel

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[2] His appeal for a "responsible" party system comprises one of the classic analyses of American political parties. See E. E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York, 1942).

[3] Malcolm E. Jewell, *The State Legislature: Politics and Practice* (New York, 1962), p. 55.

[4] Since 1964, however, Washington Republicans have shared in their party's national struggle between "moderate" and "conservative" elements. Republican Governor Daniel J. Evans, elected in spite of the Democratic tide in 1964, has provided strong leadership for the moderate group.

J. Evans, House Republican floor leader during both the 1961 and 1963 sessions, explained this advance effort by stating:

> We began to plan our strategy long before the 1962 campaign. Immediately after the 1961 legislative session we decided to make a significant, unified party effort to reduce the control of the Democrats in the House of Representatives.[5]

Most political analysts agreed that, although this "Republican offensive" might well succeed in reducing the size of the Democratic majority, the odds were against the election of a Republican-controlled House.[6] Still, Republican prospects for major gains in the House, all of whose members' (59 Democrats, 40 Republicans) terms were expiring, exceeded hopes for the Senate, where only half of the membership (35 Democrats, 14 Republicans) faced the ends of their terms.

The returns from the election of November 6, 1962, were so close that control of the legislature was in doubt until the absentee ballots were counted. Finally, on November 15, it was clear that Democratic candidates had won 51 House seats, with 48 going to Republicans. A mere 228 votes in two legislative contests denied the Republicans a clear majority of 50 seats. Democratic predominance in the Senate was continued, with 32 seats to 17 for the Republicans.

With more accuracy than they may have realized, two members of the Olympia press corps speculated on the effects of these election returns. Stub Nelson of the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* observed that Republicans and conservative-inclined Democrats would have ". . . enough muscle to thwart [any] wild programs" in the House.[7] And Jack Fischer of the Spokane *Spokesman-Review* predicted that the state would have ". . . its share of mavericks when the lawmakers get down to business early next year."[8]

II. The Coalition is Formed

It was not long before the division within the state's Democratic Party, reflected in its membership in the House, took the form of open rivalry for the speakership. The logical choice was John L. O'Brien of Seattle, who had served ten previous terms in the House —the last four as speaker. But in a pre-session party caucus on December 1, O'Brien secured only 38 votes. These were sufficient

[5] Interview with Daniel J. Evans, December 13, 1963.
[6] Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* (hereafter *P-I*), November 6, 1962, p. 1.
[7] *P-I*, November 8, 1962, p. 12.
[8] Spokane *Spokesman-Review* (hereafter *S-R*), November 11, 1962, p. 4.

to make him the Democratic candidate for speaker, but not enough to elect him if the remaining Democrats refused to go along. Twelve other votes were cast in the caucus: 9 went to William S. Day,[9] a third-term "conservative" Democrat, and 3 to Dick J. Kink of Bellingham. Although Speaker O'Brien was publicly optimistic about his prospects for re-election, Representative Robert A. Perry, reported to be Day's "chief lieutenant," stated that neither he nor Day ". . . would vote for O'Brien under any circumstances when the session opened."[10] And Day himself remarked that ". . . there is nothing personal involved, but we will carry the fight to the House floor. It is obvious that he [O'Brien] cannot be elected by a majority of Democrats."[11] Governor Albert Rosellini, a Democrat in his second term as governor, insisted that he personally ". . . would not attempt to force the dissidents opposing O'Brien into line."[12] At stake for the Governor was his legislative program, which was bound to be an issue in the 1964 gubernatorial campaign —particularly if he were to seek a third term.

As for the Republicans and their solid bloc of 48 votes, Representative Evans refused to hint at what strategy would be adopted if the Democrats remained divided. However, he did comment that "No matter how the election goes . . . we'll get a fair shake on the committee assignments."[13] At a Republican caucus on January 13, 1963, Evans set forth four courses of action: the Republicans could support O'Brien, Day, or a Republican candidate, or they could simply delay any decision pending some resolution of the Democratic intra-party conflict.[14] In the end, the Republican strategy proved to combine the last three of these possibilities.

The real drama began when the legislature convened at high noon on Monday, January 14. The Chief Clerk of the House declared nominations for speaker to be in order and first recognized Democrat Robert M. Schaefer who nominated Mr. O'Brien. The anticipated Democratic split materialized when Mrs. Joseph E. Hurley nominated Mr. Day. Also nominated was Dan Evans, the Republican leader.

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[9] Day's part in the 1962 platform walk-out contributed to his prominence among conservative Democrats.
[10] *S-R*, December 2, 1962, p. 1.
[11] *P-I*, December 3, 1962, p. 6.
[12] *P-I*, December 5, 1962, p. 15.
[13] *P-I*, December 4, 1962, p. 23.
[14] *S-R*, January 14, 1963, p. 1.

On the first ballot Evans received solid support from the 48 Republican members of the House. O'Brien received 45 Democratic votes while Day secured 6.[15] On the second roll call for speaker Evans retained his 48 votes, while O'Brien's total slipped to 44, and Day's climbed to 7.[16] On the third ballot Day received a clear majority of 57 votes cast by 47 Republicans and 10 Democrats.[17] Forty-one Democrats stayed with O'Brien, and one Republican refused to desert Mr. Evans. A motion to reconsider the vote was offered, but the clerk ruled that he could not accept it, inasmuch as a speaker had been duly elected.[18] The coalition was a *fait accompli.* As if to emphasize the fact of its control, the coalition then elected a Republican as speaker pro tempore. This time, however, only 6 Democrats, including Speaker Day, joined the 48 Republicans to provide the winning margin.

Understandably, "regular" Democrats were bitter in their criticism of the new majority coalition. Former Speaker O'Brien referred to the action of the Democratic "dissidents" as "dishonest and immoral," and he accused the Republicans of a ". . . low type of political maneuvering." He asserted that the coalition's actions threatened the destruction of the two-party system, and he promised the coalition a ". . . most interesting sixty days. You have asked for the responsibility and you are going to have it."[19] Governor Rosellini promptly termed the coalition an "unholy alliance," while disavowing any involvement with either of the contending Democratic factions, as well as any knowledge of the reasons for formation of the coalition.[20]

III. Rules and Committees

It has been noted earlier that the process of organizing a legislative body is normally executed in an atmosphere of routine, yet

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[15] The Democrats who supported Day on the first ballot were Dick Kink, Chet King, Robert Perry, W. L. McCormick, Mrs. Hurley, and Mr. Day himself.

[16] Day's seventh vote came from Democrat W. J. O'Connell of Tacoma.

[17] The three additional Democratic votes for Day were cast by Robert M. Schaefer, Mrs. Douglas Kirk, and Richard Taylor. Schaefer, who had nominated O'Brien, voted on the prevailing side in order to enable him to move for reconsideration.

[18] State of Washington, *House Journal of the Thirty-eighth Legislature,* Olympia, 1963, pp. 9-10. (Hereafter this source is referred to simply as *House Journal.*)

[19] *House Journal,* p. 11.

[20] Spokane *Daily Chronicle* (hereafter *Chronicle*), January 15, 1963, p. 1. See also January 18, 1963, p. 6.

deliberate, partisanship. The elected majority party is assumed to have the prerogative of making basic organizational decisions, which meet with token formal opposition from the minority. But the 1963 session of Washington's House of Representatives witnessed not only a most unfriendly battle for the speakership, but equally hard-fought contests over the rules and over the allocation of committee chairmanships. This entire process consumed no less than 23 days—more than one-third of the 60-day regular session permitted by the Constitution!

The conflict over rules followed Mrs. Hurley's introduction of a resolution to reduce to 21 the 31 standing committees which had been established under Rule 59 of the 1961 Rules of the House of Representatives.[21] In the course of a three-day debate over this resolution, the regular Democrats obstructed its passage on the ground that it did not specify the apportionment of committee seats between the two parties.[22] They objected, too, to the absence of any indication that they would receive equal representation on the important Rules Committee.[23] While the Speaker was silent on this point, he did make it known that 10 of the proposed 21 committee chairmanships would be given to the "regulars." The importance of the rules debate in inter-party rivalry is underscored by the fact that, as in many states, the speaker in Washington appoints all committees and committee chairmen, and he personally serves as chairman of the Rules Committee.

The regular Democrats used this debate as the occasion for insisting that they be recognized as the "minority party," that Republicans accept full responsibility for the session, and that the rebellious Democrats be referred to as "coalitionists."[24]

In a final attempt to secure passage of the Hurley resolution during the first week, Speaker Day called a special Saturday session of the House for January 19. Upon convening, Representative Perry was immediately recognized, and he moved to table all amendments to the resolution. The Speaker ignored Democratic requests to obtain the floor and declared Perry's motion passed by a voice vote.[25] With these obstacles to immediate action removed, the Speaker then declared the question before the House to be

[21] *House Journal,* p. 24.
[22] Ibid., pp. 24-34.
[23] *Chronicle,* January 18, 1963, p. 6.
[24] *House Journal,* pp. 45-74.
[25] *House Journal,* p. 81.

adoption of the Hurley resolution itself. The resolution passed by voice vote. The three-day deadlock over the structure of the committee system was thus broken by the majority coalition in 53 crucial seconds.[26] The strategy planned that morning at the Republican caucus had been implemented.

Regular Democrats raised a number of questions regarding the legality of the procedures which had been followed.[27] But Speaker Day contended that the action taken was necessary ". . . for the good of the state" and to ". . . finish the session in 60 days."[28] In spite of the removal of this stumbling block, however, argument over other rules issues continued until January 30, the seventeenth day of the session, when the coalition of 48 Republicans and 7 Democrats finally adopted permanent rules.[29] The price of this extended organizational period is suggested by the fact that, of 233 bills introduced in the two houses during the first 17 days, only one was enacted. This dealt with appropriations for the session itself.

A separate but related issue involved the allocation of House committee chairmanships among the coalitionists and the minority regular Democrats. The Speaker made committee appointments, including chairmanships, on the Monday following adoption of Mrs. Hurley's resolution creating 21 committees. Eight chairmanships were given to the regulars, two to the coalition Democrats (Rules and Ways and Means), and 11 to Republicans. At first all eight regular Democrats refused to accept their appointments. Former Speaker O'Brien's reaction in rejecting a chairmanship offered him reveals the reasoning behind this policy of refusal:

> As a member of the minority party in this House, I do not believe that I would be able to effectively perform the duties of this office to the best of my abilities because in time gone by the Speaker of the House has always had committee chairmen of the majority party.[30]

On January 27, the solid Democratic ranks broke when Mrs. Marian Gleason announced her acceptance of the chairmanship which had been offered her.[31] Although other Democrats were

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[26] *P-I,* January 20, 1963, p. 1.
[27] *House Journal,* pp. 83-87.
[28] *Chronicle,* January 21, 1963, p. 6.
[29] *House Journal,* pp. 83-87.
[30] *House Journal,* p. 107.
[31] *P-I,* January 27, 1963, p. 1. Mrs. Gleason reported that she was asked to appear before the Democratic caucus to explain her decision. When she refused, the regulars promised that she " . . . would be taken care of" when the legislature redistricted the state. See *Chronicle,* February 6, 1963, p. 6.

tempted to follow the precedent she had set, none did so; and in the end Speaker Day appointed five Republicans and two coalition Democrats to the seven vacancies. Both Representative Evans and Mrs. Gleason charged that the Governor used his influence to dissuade the regulars from accepting committee chairmanships.[32] The Governor, however, denied any such activity.[33] As a result of the delay in procuring effective committee chairmen, a number of the committees had not held a meeting by the time the session had reached the one-third mark in its 60 day constitutional life. To the important Rules Committee the Speaker appointed five dissidents (including himself as Chairman), four regular Democrats, and nine Republicans.

On February 5, more than three weeks since the opening of the session, the formalities of organization were completed. The process of considering substantive legislation was yet to begin—amid divisiveness and emotions of far greater intensity than are usual on the legislative scene. A majority coalition of Republicans and dissident Democrats clearly controlled the House. The seven most "dependable" dissidents were Speaker William Day and Representatives Robert Perry, W. J. O'Connell, W. L. McCormick, Chet King, Dick Kink, and Mrs. Joseph Hurley. Representatives Marian Gleason, Richard Taylor, and Mrs. Douglas Kirk joined the coalition at times, thus increasing the majority's margin in specific instances.

IV. Motivations of the Dissident Democrats

To trace the emergence of the majority coalition in the 1963 Washington House of Representatives is to raise the basic question: *Why was it formed?* In an attempt to arrive at a reliable body of evidence from those who were involved in these developments, an exhaustive questionnaire was sent to all of the state's legislators: 99 House members and 49 senators. Fifty members of the House (27 Republicans, 22 regular Democrats, and 1 coalitionist) and 21 senators (12 Republicans and 9 Democrats) replied to this request for information. Analysis of their responses assists in the develop-

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[32] Mrs. Gleason's comment was made in the course of a personal interview granted to one of the authors on December 12, 1963. Representative Evans' remark was reported in the *P-I*, February 6, 1963, p. 1.

[33] *P-I*, February 6, 1963, p. 1.

ment of broader judgments on the causes of the coalition, and on its validity as an approach to legislative organization.[34]

House Regular Democrats' Views

The consensus of the regular Democrats, presented statistically in Table 1, was that two primary reasons accounted for the action of the dissidents in joining the coalition. First, the regulars attributed to the dissidents an interest in gaining personal power through sharing in control of the lower chamber; second, the dissidents were characterized as having intense personal dislike of former

TABLE 1. MOTIVATIONS OF DISSIDENT DEMOCRATS IN FORMING THE MAJORITY COALITION[a]

Factors	*Numerical Ranking*			
	As perceived by House Regular Democrats	*As perceived by House Republicans*	*As perceived by Senate Democrats*	*As perceived by Senate Republicans*
a. Personal dislike of former Speaker O'Brien	3.83	3.24	2.94	2.46
b. Displeasure with the 1962 Democratic platform	4.03	1.68	3.33	1.66
c. Opportunity to produce a more "conservative" legislative program	4.04	3.16	3.61	3.41
d. Sectional considerations (eastern vs. western Wash.)	4.38	5.92	4.61	5.16
e. Loss of Democratic seats when Mr. O'Brien was speaker	4.63	4.96	5.55	5.54
f. Opportunity to "hold the line on taxes"	5.04	4.52	4.50	4.33
g. Other factors	3.13[b]	4.72	3.91	5.56

[a] The statistical method used here and in Table 2 is as follows: Some of the legislators ranked the optional alternatives by order of importance, i.e. 1, 2, 3, etc. Others cited the most influential factors by a series of checks. To arrive at a numerical rank for each check, the mean of the total checks was assigned to each. The same procedure was used in assigning ranks to the alternatives not noted on the questionnaire, i.e., the mean of the total alternatives left blank was assigned to each alternative not noted. Thus a numerical ranking was given to each alternative. The rankings were then added, and the mean of this total produced the consensus and numerical ranking cited in the tables. *A low numerical ranking is an indication that a large number of legislators cited that factor as being influential.*

[b] Most often mentioned was "an opportunity to gain personal power."

[34] Permission to quote the remarks of respondents was requested and, in most instances, obtained. Some respondents, however, asked that their names not be used in connection with certain statements, and these requests have been honored throughout this article.

Speaker O'Brien.[35] As one Democratic regular put it: "Mainly this movement started with individual egotism." Another regular put the matter somewhat more forcefully: The dissidents sought, he stated, an ". . . opportunity to obtain control and the personal power that goes with it—a personal gain clearly the main motive."

A number of responding Democrats also suggested that the defectors were motivated by a desire to enact pro-private power legislation.[36] One comment noted that the coalition was the result of the ". . . influence of private power interests in hopes of getting the Columbia Interstate Compact passed by the House."

Generally, the regular Democrats discounted dissident arguments that their principal motives were ideological—that they simply wanted the state's problems to be attacked from a more conservative stance. The regulars viewed such factors as individual ambition and dislike for the former speaker (in some cases, the two motives were probably closely related) as far more important determinants in the coalitionists' behavior than philosophical commitments. As one legislator put it:

> The Democratic platform, taxes, and liberal versus conservatism were the fartherest [*sic*] from the real reasons for the formation of the coalition. But, they were handy gimmicks which were used to give their actions legitimate cause.

House Republicans' Views

As co-partners in the coalition, it could be expected that the Republicans would evaluate the motives of their fellow coalitionists in different terms than did the regular Democratic "minority." The data in Table 1 show this to be the case. The Republicans tended to view the Democratic split as fundamentally a disagreement over ideology. In explaining reasons for the defectors' actions, Republicans most often cited dissident displeasure with the 1962 Democratic platform, their advocacy of a more conservative legislative program, and their dislike for Mr. O'Brien.[37]

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[35] Fourteen of the 22 regular Democrats responding to the questionnaire indicated a "desire for personal power" as the first or second motive. Ten of the 22 indicated a "personal dislike of Mr. O'Brien" as the first or second motive.

[36] Eight of the regular Democratic respondents mentioned private power legislation as a factor.

[37] Ten of the 27 House Republican respondents regarded "displeasure with the 1962 Democratic platform" as the primary motive of the dissident Democrats; seven felt that the dissidents desired primarily to produce a more "conservative" legislative program; five noted "a personal dislike of Mr. O'Brien" as the dissidents' primary motivation.

One Republican representative stated:

> I think mainly they were of a conservative nature and were opposed to the extreme liberal Democratic platform. . . . Nothing personal [rather, it was] . . . philosophical.

Another Republican attributed the coalitionists' actions to the "realization that a radical 'left-wing group' was taking control of the Democratic Party. . . ." And Dan Evans, then House Republican leader, captured the essence of Republican opinions on the matter in these words:

> I certainly did not see the break by the seven Democrats as a desire for personal power. To those members who helped form the new majority, philosophy and ideology were important. They were disgusted with the 1962 Democratic platform and did not feel that they could support that type of proposed legislation.[38]

Dissident Democrats' Explanation

The receipt of a response from only one of the dissident Democrats makes impossible any statistical consensus on their motives as they understood them. However, newspaper accounts are helpful, if imprecise, guides to their sentiments. In general, their explanations seem to follow the Republican pattern of emphasizing ideological differences, rather than conflicts in personalities or disagreement on such an issue as private-public power.

Speaker Day, the single Democratic coalitionist to respond to the questionnaire, cited five reasons for the defection from "regular" ranks. They were: Displeasure with the 1962 Democratic platform, sectional considerations (eastern vs. western Washington), a desire to "hold the line on taxes," the loss in Democratic membership in the House during Mr. O'Brien's tenure as speaker, and a belief that it was time for the state to develop a ". . . liberal program not based on government ownership." On another occasion, Mr. Day referred specifically to the coalition's interest in ousting John O'Brien from the speakership.[39]

Mrs. Joseph E. Hurley was reported in the press as having said that the election of Day as speaker meant the death of the 1962 Democratic platform. This was ". . . for the good of the state," she added, because the platform had been drawn up at ". . . the hands of irresponsible people."[40] Later, she issued the following statement of coalition policy:

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[38] Interview with Representative Dan Evans, December 13, 1963.
[39] *Chronicle,* January 21, 1963, p. 1.
[40] *P-I,* January 16, 1963, p. 6.

> We are determined to correct at any cost the trends toward poor, destructive legislation established in recent years that have robbed us of individual liberties and added heavily to our tax burdens.[41]

Sectional considerations seem to have been relatively unimportant in the emergence of the coalition. This factor received a low rating among every group whose views appear in Table 1. The fact that only three of the seven dissidents were from the eastern part of the state puts to rest any assumption that they were bound together by a common regional interest. Still, the shift from a "western" to an "eastern" speaker carried a certain ring of equity. This sentiment is evident in the following statement of coalitionist W. L. McCormick of Spokane:

> I am sure Spokane County will fare well in the area of highway development, social security, public assistance, and labor under Speaker Day's leadership. When John O'Brien was speaker, his first and sometimes his only consideration was King County [Seattle and environs].[42]

Senators' Views

Members of the Senate of both parties agreed on the three most important reasons for the dissidents' action in forming the coalition, although they disagreed in assigning priorities to the three factors. Table 1 shows the opinions of Senate Democrats to include dissident dislike of Mr. O'Brien, displeasure with the 1962 Democratic platform, and a desire to produce a more conservative legislative program, in that order. Senate Republicans, much like their House colleagues, attached somewhat less importance to the low esteem in which the defectors seem to have regarded the former speaker. Instead, Republicans elevated platform considerations to first place among the motivations they attributed to the coalitionists.

V. Motivations of the Republicans

House Republicans' Self-Appraisal

The very meaning of the word "coalition" suggests that its participants represent varying but compatible interests; furthermore, it suggests that they are likely to seek at least partially differing goals. A coalition, then, is in no sense a "merger" or an "amalgamation." Rather, it is an expedient through which the member individuals (or groups), while preserving their separate identities,

[41] *Chronicle*, February 13, 1963, p. 1.
[42] Ibid.

can progress more rapidly toward their objectives than would result if each were to work independently. Applying this reasoning to the coalition in the 1963 Washington House of Representatives, one would expect to find that dissident and Republican motives were harmonious, but not necessarily identical. The responses to the questionnaire sent to legislators substantiate this hypothesis.

The consensus of the House Republicans, presented in Table 2, was that their action was taken for three primary reasons: the coalition offered an opportunity to produce a more conservative legislative program, it provided a necessary means of organizing and conducting the business of the House, and it enabled greater Republican representation on the committee which was destined to deal with reapportionment.[43] The importance of the first of these factors as part of the "responsible" image the Republicans portrayed is suggested in this statement made by Representative Evans immediately following Speaker Day's election:

> May I say clearly and emphatically that the decision [to elect Day] was not made on a basis of personality. The decision rested on a choice we had to make between two programs and two courses of action. We had to make a choice [between] you who walked out of the [1962 Democratic] convention, and those who adopted a platform we felt was radical and in control of a radical element.[44]

The idea of supporting a less "radical" program fits with the Republican position, not without merit, that organization of the House depended on some kind of Republican action and, faced with the available choices, they selected the more moderate course. There was a genuine organizational crisis. Several pre-session attempts to secure unity among Democratic House members had met with failure. These efforts included two secret and unproductive meetings of O'Brien and Day in December, 1963. The issue as the Republicans saw it is well phrased in this statement by a Republican legislator:

> A coalition was necessary for the House to organize. The Republicans did not have a majority and the two Democratic parties would not reconcile their differences. There would be a coalition either way. When you have a choice you take the best alternative.

[43] Nine of the Republican respondents cited "an opportunity to produce a more 'conservative' legislative program" as the primary reason for their actions; seven felt their primary motivation was to enable the House to organize and conduct its business; and five stated that their action was caused by a desire to have greater representation on the Committee on Constitution, Elections, and Apportionment.

[44] *House Journal,* pp. 10-11.

TABLE 2. MOTIVATIONS OF HOUSE REPUBLICANS IN FORMING THE MAJORITY COALITION[a]

Factors	Numerical Ranking: As expressed by House Republicans	As perceived by House Regular Democrats	As perceived by Senate Republicans	As perceived by Senate Democrats
a. Opportunity to produce a more "conservative" legislative program	2.92	5.12	3.17	4.69
b. Necessary to organize and conduct the business of the House	2.99	6.17	3.50	6.00
c. Opportunity for greater representation on the Reapportionment Committee	3.80	1.74	2.16	3.19
d. Opportunity for greater representation on the Rules Committee	4.77	4.72	4.12	4.31
e. Opportunity for greater representation on the Legislative Council	5.35	4.09	5.00	4.65
f. Opportunity for greater representation on the Ways and Means Committee	5.38	5.08	5.50	4.75
g. Personal dislike of former Speaker O'Brien	5.79	6.00	6.37	5.55
h. Insistence of Representative Evans	7.24	5.09	7.20	5.56
i. Other factors	6.81	5.30	7.64	6.25

[a] The statistical method used here was explained in connection with Table 1.

There is no evidence that Republican support for O'Brien's candidacy for the speakership was solicited or offered.

Although the collective opinion of Republican House members placed the reapportionment issue in third place among their reasons for joining the coalition, this factor may well have been more influential than its rank would indicate. Regardless of the Democratic defection, this issue would have pervaded the 1963 legislative session (which had been directed by a U.S. District Court to reapportion or be prepared for the Court itself to do it). In short, while reapportionment *per se* may have been subordinated to other issues in the immediate steps leading to the coalition, that difficult problem remained long after other purposes of the coalition had been at least partially achieved. Republican fears of Democratic action in this regard are captured in the following legislator's statement:

> . . . If the Democrats gained control of the House they would redistrict the state in such a way that the Republicans would not have a chance to control the House or the Senate or elect a governor for many years.

It is worth noting that Republicans cited any "insistence" by Mr. Evans as the *least* important factor in their nearly unanimous decision to join the coalition.

Views of the Regular Democrats

Table 2 reveals sharp contrasts between Republican and "regular Democratic" estimates of Republican motives in helping to form the majority coalition. The Democrats elevate to a strong first place the contention that the prime Republican purpose was to gain control of the House Committee on Constitution, Elections, and Apportionment.[45] Additional reasons, as expressed by Democratic respondents in descending order of importance, include alleged Republican desires to secure increased representation on the Legislative Council, the Rules Committee, and the Ways and Means Committee. Democrats cited Mr. Evans' influence as next in importance, followed by Republican interest in enacting a more conservative program. All but dismissed by regular Democrats was the Republican argument that the coalition was essential to enable the House to organize and conduct its business.

As one Democratic House member summed it up:

> The Republicans . . . wanted to exercise control over the reapportionment question in the state. One sure way of achieving this was by forming the coalition with the dissident Democrats. Secondly . . . it must be remembered that the Republicans had not been in control of the House for five sessions [not since 1955]. This was their opportunity to gain legislative power without a Republican majority.

Mr. Evans' role in organizing the coalition was described by a Democratic legislator as follows:

> [The coalition was] an effort to thrust forward Mr. Evans in his bid for the governorship in the state of Washington. This . . . put Mr. Evans in a commanding role in the House which . . . [gained] him publicity. . . .

At this point it is appropriate to distinguish between Democratic attitudes toward the actions of the dissidents and those of the Republicans. While the regulars charged the dissidents' conduct to such motives as individual ambition for power, dislike of former

[45] Fifteen of the 22 Democrats who responded regarded reapportionment as the primary reason for the Republicans' joining the coalition.

Speaker O'Brien, ties with private power interests, and support for a more conservative legislative program, they tended to view Republican participation in the coalition as a means to certain ends, rather than as an end in itself. The dissidents, after all, could look forward to but limited long-term benefits following the expiration of the coalition. The Republicans, on the other hand, could look forward to the day when they would elect a governor and clear majorities in the legislature. Hopefully, according to this reasoning, the Republicans' chance to share in legislative leadership through the coalition would hasten rather than postpone the day of securing a popular mandate.

Senatorial Opinions

It will be recalled that senators of both parties showed remarkable agreement in their estimates of the dissident Democrats' motives for joining the coalition. Table 2 shows this tendency to be repeated at a somewhat lower level of agreement in senatorial evaluations of the motivations of Republicans in the House. Senators of both parties regarded as the first consideration the Republican opportunity to secure, through the coalition, greater representation on the Committee on Constitution, Elections, and Apportionment.[46] Following this primary factor, Republican senators concluded that their House counterparts acted to produce a more conservative legislative program, and to enable the House to organize and set about its business. Democratic senators regarded secondary Republican motives to be their desires for greater representation on additional important House committees. Senators of neither party appeared to put much stock in the theory that Evans' insistence was an important ingredient in the process of securing Republican unity in the coalition cause.

The lack of vast differences between opinions of the senators from both parties suggests, as do external accounts, that the bitterness which enveloped the coalition issue in the House did not invade the upper chamber.

VI. Conclusion

As with most political controversies of consequence (which the 1963 majority coalition surely was), all available evidence does not

[46] Seven of the 12 Senate Republicans and five of the nine Senate Democrats who responded to the questionnaire cited this as either the first or second most important reason for the House Republicans' action.

lead to one inevitable assessment. Evaluation requires a point of view and a balancing of relevant factors.

To answer the question "Why was it formed?" is to require separate conclusions regarding the purposes of each of the two components of the coalition. The weight of available evidence clearly suggests that dislike of former Speaker O'Brien and preference for a more conservative approach to public policy were the dominant motivations of the dissident Democrats. Party lines account for a difference in view as to which of these factors was more important, regular Democrats emphasizing the former and Republicans (and dissidents) the latter.

The leading purposes of the Republicans were their interest in more conservative public policy, the need to organize the House, and the desire for greater committee representation (particularly to affect reapportionment). Here, too, partisanship causes different views of the relative importance of these factors, Republicans tending toward the first two factors and Democrats toward the third.

In general, the coalition participants defended their actions on the ground that a more conservative approach to policy issues was best for the state. Opponents of the coalition, on the other hand, viewed it as a revolt against O'Brien personally as House Democratic leader, and as a tactic for greater representation on important House committees. In short, the coalitionists justified their actions on the basis of commitment to a particular philosophy of government, while the anti-coalitionists saw these same actions as maneuvers for legislative advantage.

Both views, of course, are correct; the differences between them are in the vantage points of the observers rather than in the substance of the actions themselves. The majority coalition was more conservative in its politics than was the apparent Democratic "majority." Formal control of the House was, moreover, an obvious prerequisite to implementation of the coalition's philosophy.

At least as significant as the coalition's influence on 1963 legislation were two subsequent developments. The first of these to occur was the election of Republican floor leader Dan Evans to Washington's governorship in November, 1964. The second involves reapportionment, believed by many of our respondents to be a leading cause of the coalition.

Although the two houses of the 1963 legislature were unable to

agree upon a reapportionment plan, by federal court order this was the first subject to confront the 1965 legislature. And that legislature, without any formal party defection, finally wrote a bill which was acceptable to Governor Evans (who vetoed two earlier bills he regarded as unsatisfactory). Thus the Republicans, unable to influence reapportionment through the coalition in 1963, were able (and entitled) in 1965 to invoke the powers of the chief executive in the resolution of this issue.

The ultimate effects of reapportionment remain to be seen in the election of November, 1966. Most observers predict an increase in Republican strength in the legislature where, at present, they are outnumbered 60-39 in the House and 32-17 in the Senate. Republicans are expected to do particularly well in the House of Representatives, where they have their best chance in years of obtaining a clear majority. *Mathematically,* the minimum Republican prospect in the House appears to be an opportunity for participation in another majority coalition. Should either of these possibilities come to pass, the state might yet be set on the conservative course the 1963 coalitionists regarded as their primary objective.

But mathematics alone may not dictate the outcome of future events comparable to those which led to the 1963 majority coalition. Duplicate situations are rarely found in the art of politics. Once-ignored arguments against the coalition device may have greater impact in changed circumstances. Among present realities are Republican occupancy of the governorship and the fact that the incumbent, Daniel Evans, has established moderate leadership in his party and state administration.

The fundamental criticism of the majority coalition must be its variance from the minimum norm of two-party legislative politics in America: For organizational purposes, a member should vote with the party whose label he wears at the polls. There can be no "party government" without loyalty to party in such basic decisions as electing a speaker and organizing committees. As one Republican senator commented in his response to our questionnaire:

> I believe that party responsibility in our form of government cannot be wholly ignored. The essence of our government is the two-party system. Our form of government is a compromise between the concepts of struggle . . . natural to all individuals, and the concept of unity, the essence of which prevents the downfall of society.

Governor Evans himself, burdened with the heavy responsibilities of chief of party as well as chief executive, may well derail any attempted new coalition during his administration. He clearly gave no encouragement to whisperings of this kind in the days preceding the meeting of the 1965 legislative session. And regular Democrats have taken steps toward averting a repetition of the 1963 experience. In 1965, they offered Representative Robert M. Schaefer for speaker rather than Mr. O'Brien. Also, the dissidents were largely undisciplined by the new legislature, and most were given desirable committee assignments. Former Speaker Day, for example, retained his seat on the Rules Committee, while four defectors were appointed to the Ways and Means Committee. These actions seem to represent Democratic determination to heal the wounds which caused and were further aggravated by the 1963 schism.

In summary, the Republican governor and most Democrats seem aware of the statistical prospects for a future coalition. But for their own reasons they evidently have little enthusiasm for it, and some actions have been taken specifically to avert it. These efforts may succeed in preserving some minimum of "party government" even in Washington.